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Summulae de Locis Dialecticis by Johannes Buridanus (review)

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their [sic] powers" (12). But only a slim number of the contributed essays take this focus (Taylor, Tellkamp, Hackett). Still, it is the sum of the essays—all of high quality and some truly original—which merit recommendation for scholars and postgraduate students specialising in Arabic and Latin medieval philosophical psychology alike.

KATJA KRAUSE

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Johannes Buridanus. *Summulae de Locis Dialecticis*. Edited by Niels Jørgen Green-Pedersen. Artistarium 10-6. Series editor, Sten Ebbesen. Turnhout: Brepols, 2013. Pp. xxxiv + 138. Paper, €60.00.

The fourteenth-century logician John Buridan was without a doubt one of the sharpest, most gifted among Latin medieval logicians. Treatise 6 of his gigantic logical compendium *Summulae de Dialectica* (English translation by Gyula Klima, Yale University Press, 2000, made on the basis of a preliminary Latin edition by Hubert Hubien) is on dialectical loci. This is the text that has just been critically edited by Niels Jørgen Green-Pedersen as part of the ongoing collective effort to produce critical editions of all the treatises of Buridan's *Summulae*; only the treatise on fallacies remains. Given the extraordinary importance of his logical works, not only in terms of theoretical sophistication but also in terms of how widely read they were, one cannot overestimate the importance of these critical editions of the different treatises in the *Summulae* for the students and scholars of Latin medieval logic.

To appreciate the importance of this publication, some context is in order. Among the six logical works by Aristotle, two in particular deal specifically with arguments and their structures: the *Prior Analytics* and the *Topics*. One could add to the list the *Sophistical Refutations*, which is about arguments that appear correct but are not. The *Prior Analytics* presents a rigorously defined logical system, syllogistic, which is able to determine exactly when an argument is valid or not, but only for arguments fitting the "mold" defined by the theory: arguments composed of categorical sentences, having two premises and one conclusion. In this sense, the scope of action of syllogistic is rather limited. In the long tradition of Aristotelian logic, the large surplus of arguments one might be interested in, but which do not fit the syllogistic mold, was often treated instead from the point of view of the framework presented in the *Topics*.

Aristotle's *Topics* is above all a work on dialectic, that is, the oral disputations that occupied such a prominent role in ancient Greek philosophy. Especially Books I and VIII focus on the rules and principles for such dialectical exchanges. Books II to VII in turn present what became known among Latin medieval authors as the 'doctrine of the loci,' that is, argumentation schemata that can be used to produce, evaluate or justify valid arguments (see chapter 2, *Handbook of Argumentation Theory*, Springer, 2015). The doctrine of the loci is not nearly as systematic and rigorous as syllogistic, but it represents an important complement to the latter in virtue of its broader scope.

As is well known, in the first instance Boethius was the sole transmitter of Aristotelian logic to the Latin medieval tradition. His textbooks on syllogistic as well as his treatise on topical differentiae were widely read; in the latter, Boethius focuses on the doctrine of the loci presented in Books II to VII of the *Topics*, which thus became a stock item in the Latin medieval logical tradition. Most if not all major authors of the period composed treatises or chapters on the topic, and more often than not under the influence of Boethius. Buridan is no exception to the rule.

By the time Buridan was writing the *Summulae*, the doctrine of loci was already losing some of its relevance in virtue of the development of theories of consequence (see Catarina Dutilh Novaes, "Medieval Theories of Consequence," *Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, 2012), which generalized and unified both the theory of syllogistic and the doctrine of the loci. But it remained an important topic in the logical curriculum, as evidenced by the

fact that Buridan includes a whole treatise on it in his *Summulae*. Buridan does not seem to introduce great novelties into the general content of doctrines of the loci, but with his characteristic sharpness, produces what is perhaps “the most precise and most interesting exposition of the doctrine of the loci in the medieval logical literature,” as Green-Pedersen rightly comments.

The volume is prepared with the usual care and competence of all volumes in the series, which involves some of the most diligent and skilled scholars of medieval logic currently in activity. Green-Pedersen in particular is a leading authority on the Latin tradition related to Aristotle’s *Topics*: his 1984 book *The Tradition of the Topics in the Middle Ages* (Philosophia Verlag) remains the most authoritative source on this subject-matter. It includes a brief introduction presenting both the general editorial project of the *Summulae*, and the specifics of the treatise on loci in particular. As such, the text will be of great interest to students and scholars of medieval logic wanting to consult the text in the original language. The doctrine of the loci remains a fundamental chapter of the history of logic, and here it is presented by one of the best logicians of all times, John Buridan.

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Nicole Oresme. *Questiones super Physicam (Books I-VII)*. Edited by Stefano Caroti, Jean Celeyrette, Stafan Kirschner, and Edmond Mazet. Studien und Texte zur Geistesgeschichte des Mittelalters, 112. Leiden: Brill, 2013. Pp. xlv + 853. Cloth, \$314.00.

Nicole Oresme (ca. 1320–82) is one of the great figures of scholastic philosophy. Heavily influenced by the nominalism of Ockham and Buridan, he is nevertheless on many issues quite independent and original. With this volume, Caroti et al. make available for the first time in print Oresme’s massive question-commentary on Aristotle’s *Physics*. Based on the sole manuscript known to survive (which runs only through Book VII), this work shows Oresme at his philosophical best, ranging widely over metaphysics and natural philosophy. The text has been edited with considerable care, and should take its place as one of the highpoints of fourteenth-century scholasticism.

The editors are able to date the work with some precision to the mid-1340s. It cannot be later than early 1347, because Oresme here articulates a deflationary conception of accidents as modes (see esp. I.5, II.6, III.6), a thesis that would be condemned that year, and that Oresme’s subsequent works would abandon. This adventuresome thesis is characteristic of the work, which very regularly takes up topics that lie quite far from Aristotle’s text, and proposes intriguing solutions.

Much of the most interesting material comes in Book I, which predictably contains questions devoted to the principles of change, but also includes more distinctively scholastic questions on topics such as the plurality of substantial forms and the relationship between parts and wholes. Oresme’s handling of the last of these topics in I.7 is admirably fine-grained. He maintains both that the whole is just its parts taken all together (*simul*), and that Aristotle’s notable example from *Metaphysics Z*, the syllable ‘ba,’ is essentially correct. Oresme notes that the latter of these had been offered as an objection to his own view, seemingly resulting in a tension between the two claims, but he shows how to dissolve the tension by distinguishing between the compounded and divided senses of “the whole is all of its parts.”

The discussion of efficient causation in II.8 is also particularly interesting. There, Oresme gives a provocative indifference argument that demonstrates God’s continuous conservation, and not mere creation. According to Oresme, if we accept that (i) in the first instant of time, God created creation, and (ii) the first instant of time is intrinsically the same as any other instant of time, then it follows that (iii) God creates at any, and every, other instant of time. This argument relies on the general structure of indifference arguments, as well